

Testimony in FAVOR of HB 231

Testimony of Robert Landau

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On Behalf of Silver Spring Justice Coalition

My name is Robert Landau, and I am testifying for the Silver Spring Justice Coalition. Formed after the killing of Robert White by a Montgomery County Police Officer in 2018, we are a coalition of grassroots community organizations and residents of Montgomery County that works to eliminate harm by police while empowering community and individuals.

It is well documented that there are significant racial disparities in traffic stops. In Montgomery County Blacks are subject to traffic stops twice as often as Whites, and Black men are three times more likely to receive traffic violations than White men.

Traffic cameras, when properly placed and used, are a more objective way of increasing traffic safety, while moving police out of an area in which they are not needed and in which they cause harm. Moving the ticket-issuing authority to the County's Department of Transportation makes clear that traffic enforcement is not a police function, but a transportation department function, and helps move us to limit police-work to addressing serious crime.

But at the heart of this bill is local control and autonomy. The Montgomery County Executive and County Council have unanimously supported this enabling legislation, now two years in a row. I urge your favorable report of this bill.